

UKCRC  
Registered  
Clinical  
Trials Units



# UKCRC Registered Clinical Trials Units response to the Cross Party Group on Medical Research



igniting our potential

## **UKCRC Registered Clinical Trials Units response to the Cross Party Group on Medical Research.**

Bangor, Swansea and Cardiff Universities host the three UKCRC registered Clinical Trials Units in Wales. Together these units develop and deliver, medical research at the interface between science and the people of Wales, working closely with Public Health Wales, NHS Wales and Social care systems, within Wales. The results of our research have informed clinical and social care practice within Wales today and on a global scale. A number of key UK and Welsh government level documents have been released over recent months, with a focus on “clinical” medical research and more specifically on clinical trials.

As the Welsh members of the UK-wide UKCRC CTU Network, we welcome one of the most recent documents (Published- November 2023); the “[Cross Party Group on Medical Research Inquiry Report: How Medical research Benefits the People of Wales](#)”. Specifically, we would like to highlight the report’s consideration of the benefits to patients of clinical trials, the economic impact to Wales of funded medical research, the benefits of medical research to the NHS and the public desire to have the opportunity to take part in such research. The report acknowledges the benefits of clinical trials to enhance care and better outcomes for patients, increase engagement, and job satisfaction for NHS staff as well as the economic benefits to our society. None of these benefits would have been gained without considerable commitment and leadership from Higher Education Institutions in Wales and specifically from the Welsh academic CTUs. The Welsh CTUs also contribute significantly to the broader UKCRC Registered CTU Network enhancing the clinical trial environment across the UK and internationally.

Despite these benefits the report highlights key areas that need to be addressed and itemises these in seven recommendations included following our reflections below.

We take this opportunity to reflect upon these in relation to the work of the CTUs and combine these into three clear messages:

- 1. Clinical Trials Research will deliver earlier impact with the ability to improve public health and patient outcomes in a cost-effective manner through rapid recruitment of patients and the public, in collaboration with a well-supported incentivised pan-Wales multi-disciplinary team of clinicians and allied health care professionals, alongside NHS and social care Research and Development infrastructure. A strategy to deliver this is welcomed and will be supported by the Welsh CTUs.**
- 2. Public and patient engagement will enhance study delivery, as well as equality diversity and inclusivity and is a key area of methodological development in clinical trials led by the Welsh CTUs**
- 3. The host institutions for the Welsh academic CTUs are resourced at a significantly lower level than their English counterparts which impacts their ability to be competitive in attracting research funding at all levels, uncertainties about future funding models further undermine our ability to develop and innovate, as well as contribute to the wide UK agenda on clinical trials**

### **Cross party Group Medical research recommendations:**

- 1. To ensure that as many clinicians as possible are having research conversations with their patients Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) should offer continuing professional development for clinicians on effectively engaging patients in medical research.**
- 2. HCRW should commit to work with Public Health Wales to deliver regular targeted awareness raising campaigns to allow people to identify and pursue research opportunities that are relevant to them.**
- 3. HCRW should work with the NHS Executive and local health boards to evaluate the effectiveness of local delivery of clinical trials through the hub and spoke model by the end of this Senedd term. This evaluation should be made publicly available.**
- 4. Medical research should be a vital part of any workforce planning. HEIW and HCRW should publish a strategy by the end of this Senedd term to work together to ensure that NHS staff are able to access development opportunities in academia alongside their clinical roles.**
- 5. The NHS Executive should outline as a priority how it plans to work with local health boards to ensure clinicians have protected time for research and that this is advertised in new NHS vacancy adverts.**

**6. Welsh Government should consider the experience in Catalonia and identify whether elements of this approach could be implemented in Wales. This should include increased incentivisation of collaboration between the NHS, Welsh universities, and industry.**

**7. To prioritise medical research within economic development, Welsh universities desperately need to see an uplift to QR funding provided by Welsh Government. Without the same support as the rest of the UK, Welsh universities and Welsh researchers will be unable to compete for UK-wide funding. Welsh Government must address these funding inequalities to allow research in Wales to drive a thriving economy.**